

Military Collection
State Archives of North Carolina

Crawford P. Dawkins Papers (WWI 120)
[World War I]

Collection Number: WWI 120

Title: Crawford P. Dawkins Papers

Dates: 1915-1921, 1950, undated

Creator: Crawford P. Dawkins; Ida H. Dawkins; and various individuals.

Abstract

The Crawford P. Dawkins Papers is composed of correspondence, a high school graduation program, a copy print photograph, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the pre-military life and World War I service of Crawford P. Dawkins of the village of Roberdel in Richmond County, N.C. Dawkins served in the U.S. Navy between 1918 and 1920. The bulk of the collection is composed of correspondence between Dawkins and his girlfriend Ida Hammond (who later became his wife after WWI) during Dawkins years in high school, college, and while with the Navy in WWI. The letters detail the development of a young couple's friendship and romance that was interrupted by the war. The letters detail life at home in Roberdel, life for Dawkins at Davidson College and Trinity College, and life on ships and in various international port cities.

The collection also includes correspondence to and from Ida Hammond (Dawkins) with friends during and after WWI. Some interesting items in the collection are: Dawkins' original 1916 Roberdel High School graduation program; his original WWI local draft board physical exam notice postcard; and a copy print of a studio portrait of Dawkins in his WWI Navy uniform.

Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use: There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Preferred Citation

[Item name or title], [Box Number], [Folder Numbers], Crawford P. Dawkins Papers, WWI 120, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Acquisition

The collection was donated to the Military Collection at the State Archives of North Carolina from Janice D. Squires of Fayetteville, N.C., daughter of Crawford P. Dawkins, in February 2018.

Processing Information

This collection did not have an original order when it was received by the State Archives from the donor. The letters were folded, and many were stored in their original envelopes. The correspondence had been preserved in their original state by Ida Dawkins, wife of Crawford Dawkins, and passed down directly to the donor. A number of letters were undated, or are individual pages of letters for which the other sheets are missing. The collection is arranged by the date and creator of the materials, then chronologically within the archival folders.

Correspondence is arranged within folders chronologically based on the dates written on the letters or from a circa date taken from the letters' envelopes. Letters for which only month and year could be determined were added within a folder at the end of that month's set of dated letters. Correspondence without any dates were arranged at the end of the chronology for the different groupings of correspondence, at the back of the folder. All envelopes were discarded after any necessary information was added in pencil to the letters. Envelopes with unique information or dates were photocopied and attached to each letter, using an acid-free plastic clip. One of Dawkins' letters was so fragile, that the two sheets of the letter were placed in an acid-free archival photograph sleeve. This was done to stabilize the sheets, and allow for researchers to handle the pages without causing further physical damage to them.

The copy print photograph in the collection was provided to the State Archives by the donor for reference purposes. The donor's family does not have any original WWI-era photographs of Crawford Dawkins, and the copy print was made years before by a family member while the original photograph existed. The copy print has been individually stored in an acid-free, archival plastic sleeve to allow for researchers to handle the image without causing damage to the image's surface, and to improve preservation during long-term storage. The photograph has been numbered with a soft HB No. 2 pencil on the back, according to the collection number, the box and folder numbers, and an individual image number. For example, the number "WWI 120.B1.F8.1" should be interpreted as "WWI Papers 120 collection, Box 1, Folder 8, Photograph 1." The identification of the image has been created in the finding aid, but not written on the photograph itself during this processing of the collection.

Processed by: Matthew M. Peek, April 2018.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by date and creator of materials, chronologically in folders.

Biographical Note

Crawford Paul Dawkins was born on October 8, 1895, in Richmond County, N.C., to Commodore Perry and Martha Ellen (who went by “Evaline”) Lancaster Dawkins. By 1900, the Dawkins family had moved to the small industrial village of Roberdel in central Richmond County. They moved there when Martha Dawkins became terminally ill, and she needed to be attended to by a doctor in Roberdel named Dr. Ledbetter. Crawford’s mother died on April 20, 1900, leaving Commodore Dawkins to raise his six children alone. Three of the oldest Dawkins children would work in a cotton mill to help support the family during this period, as Commodore Dawkins would work on his farm. On November 22, 1905, Commodore Dawkins remarried to Mary Catherine Bruton. The Dawkins continued living in Roberdel through the 1910s.

Crawford Dawkins would attend Roberdel High School, and graduated in May 1916 as one of only three people in his senior class. One of his best friends during his school years was a girl named Ida M. Hammond, with whom he would correspond throughout his time in college. Dawkins went on to attend college at Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., starting in the fall of 1916. By the fall 1917 school year, Dawkins had transferred as a sophomore to Trinity College (present-day Duke University) in Durham, N.C. By January 1918, he was working as a night clerk at the Durham Hotel (not the same as the mid-twentieth century “Durham Hotel”) while attending college.

Dawkins received his local draft board reporting notice for a physical examination in January 1918, and he would write to a friend in February 1918 that he expected to be soon serving in the U.S. Army during World War I. Between February and May 1918, Crawford Dawkins entered military service for the war. At some point, he would come to serve in the U.S. Navy. Apparently, Crawford Dawkins and Ida Hammond intended to get married during one of his Navy furloughs in December 1918, and the couple even took out a marriage certificate. Although it is unknown what changed, the couple would not marry until December 24, 1920, in Richmond County, N.C.

Little detail is really known about Dawkins’ Navy service, as his military records have not survived. Any ranks he may have had are unknown. He appears to have been serving with the Navy attached to the Emergency Fleet Corporation, which was responsible for the construction and operation of wartime shipping for supplies and cargo. By March 1919, Dawkins was assigned to the SS *Saucon*, beginning after its construction was completed at the Hog Island Shipyard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in March 1919. During his Navy service, Dawkins would travel around the world, including to the following locations: Colon, Panama; Quebec City, Quebec, Canada; Liverpool, England; Barbados; Romania; Japan; and China. According to a May 1920 local news item in a Richmond County, N.C., newspaper, Crawford Dawkins spent two years serving in the U.S. Navy, and returned home to Roberdel in May 1920.

After his leaving military service, Crawford Dawkins would go to work for the Strachan Steamship Company in 1920, lived for a period of the late summer in Newport News, Virginia. It is unclear where he traveled, what he did for the company, and how long he remained employed with them. By October 1921, Crawford and Ida Dawkins had come to live in Raleigh, N.C. By 1924, Dawkins would move with his wife to Greensboro, N.C., where he was working as a manager for the R. M. Parrott mimeograph machine business.

By 1930, the Dawkins had come to live in Raleigh, N.C., where Crawford was working as a typewriter mechanic for Alf Williams & Company. By 1931, Dawkins had become the manager of Carolina Typewriter Company in Raleigh. He took over the ownership and operation of the company through the 1960s, and believed to have retired from Carolina Typewriter. Crawford P. Dawkins died on December 30, 1985, in Raleigh, N.C., and was buried in Montlawn Memorial Park in the same city.

Scope and Content

The collection is composed of correspondence, a high school graduation program, a copy print photograph, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the pre-military life and World War I service of Crawford P. Dawkins of the village of Roberdel in Richmond County, N.C. Dawkins served in the U.S. Navy between 1918 and 1920. The bulk of the collection is composed of correspondence between Dawkins and his girlfriend Ida Hammond (who later became his wife after WWI) during Dawkins years in high school, college, and while with the Navy in WWI. The letters detail the development of a young couple's friendship and romance that was interrupted by the war. The letters detail life at home in Roberdel, life for Dawkins at Davidson College and Trinity College, and life on ships and in various international port cities.

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Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Dawkins, Crawford P. (Crawford Paul), 1895-1985
Dawkins, Ida H. (Ida Mae Hammond)

Places

Richmond County (N.C.)
Roberdel (N.C.)

Subject—Topical

United States. Navy--History--World War, 1914-1918

United States. Navy--World War, 1914-1918--Personal narratives
 World War, 1914-1918--North Carolina
 World War, 1914-1918--United States

Material Types

Correspondence
 Military records
 Photographs
 Postcards

Collection Inventory

Box	Description	Date
1/1	Dawkins High School Correspondence	1915
1/2	Dawkins' Roberdel High School Graduation Program	May 1916
1/3	Dawkins College Letters	1916-1918, undated
1/4	Dawkins' Draft Board Physical Exam Notice	January 1918
1/5	Dawkins Wartime Correspondence to Ida Hammond	1918, February-May 1919
1/6	Dawkins Wartime Correspondence to Ida Hammond	July-September 1919, April 1920
1/7	Dawkins Correspondence to Ida Hammond	1920
1/8	Dawkins WWI Navy Portrait [Copy Print]	Undated
WWI 120.B1.F8.1: Copy print of an original studio portrait of Crawford P. Dawkins of Roberdel, N.C., wearing his U.S. Navy uniform, taken during World War I while he served in the Navy (undated).		
1/9	Ida Hammond Letters to Crawford Dawkins	1918-1920
1/10	Dawkins Family Correspondence	1921, 1950
1/11	Miscellaneous Correspondence	1918, 1920, undated